Foundations of Student Learning Assessment

A workshop presented by the Graduate and Undergraduate Assessment Committees
April 2 and 3, 2012
10th Floor, COE
Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purposes and Audience
- Foundations of Program Assessment
- Navigating the WEAVEonline software
Audience

- Program faculty
- Department administrators
- University administrators
- Accrediting agencies (includes SACS)
Goals should be focused and specific and should clearly state what we want completers of the program to **be**.

Objectives should state what we want completers to **know** or be able to do.

Assessments should relate directly to the objectives and should be designed to yield information on the effectiveness of programs.

Analysis of data should lead to actions aimed at program improvement and may lead to new goals for completers.

Analysis should be multi-faceted and should offer a spectrum of performance levels.

Comprehensive review of programs for accreditation will depend upon excellent narratives and exhibits that showcase the integrity of the program assessment process.

Accreditation

**Accreditation**
Who are we and why are we here? (Mission)

What will be the product(s) of this endeavor? (Goals and Objectives)

What evidence will indicate whether the Goals and Objectives are met? (Measures, Targets, Findings)

How will we know how to improve our results? (Analysis and Action Plans)
The Mission statement for a program should be a broad and succinct statement that conveys the scope and purpose of faculty members’ expectations for student learning.
The Mission statement should . . .

- be consistent with the scope of a university’s mission and strategic plan;
- be specific to the degree program, not a restatement of the department or college Mission Statement;
- establish a sense of identity for the program; and
- be faculty-driven.
Mission Statement Examples

Graduate program:
The mission of the M.S. in Physics program is to prepare students for careers in teaching and/or research in Physics and related fields.

Undergraduate program
The BSE program in Early Childhood Education prepares teacher candidates to direct the education of young children from pre-school through elementary grades.
How does the program address the intent of the Mission?

- Goals
- Outcomes/Objectives
The Goals should be consistent with the program’s Mission and should define what the faculty members expect their students to **BE**. These are most often presented as characteristics of the student (e.g., “Students in this program should be good critical thinkers”).
Goals

Graduate Program Assessment Examples:

MED English Education:

1. Candidates are informed educators who have expert knowledge of the content needed to teach English Language Arts in Grades 6–12.

2. Candidates are professional educators with advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to succeed in teaching English Language Arts in Grades 6–12.

3. Candidates are highly effective educators whose teaching practices have a measurable impact on the English Language Arts learning of their students.
The main difference between a goal and an objective is that objectives are measurable.
Outcomes/Objectives

The Learning Outcomes (a.k.a. Objectives) for a program should translate the assessed program’s Goals into measurable student performance. These are most often presented as what students **Know** or can **DO**.
Goal 1

Objective 1
Objective 2

Goal 2

Objective 3

Goal 3

Objective 4
Objective 5
Outcomes/Objectives

Graduate Program Assessment Examples:

MED English Education – Outcomes related to Goal I (content):

1. Candidates have knowledge and understanding of English grammars, the history and evolution of the English language, the foundations of reading and writing processes, an extensive range of literature, and a wide range of literary theories.

2. Candidates create learning environments which promote respect for and support of individual differences of ethnicity, race, language, culture, gender, and ability through planning and implementation of a wide range of instructional methods, and curriculum materials and view teacher-researcher models of inquiry, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues as career-long efforts and responsibilities.
CTW Program Assessment Example:

1. Students recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals (APA 3.3).
2. Students approach problems creatively and effectively (APA 3.2 & 3.4).
Outcomes/Objectives

Undergraduate Program Assessment Examples:

1. Students will perform basic techniques used in biological research which are applied in a laboratory setting.

2. Students will apply the scientific method to critically analyze problems in biology. Inherent in these skills are the ability to formulate a hypothesis, perform background research, design appropriate experiments to address biological questions, and analyze the results of the experiment.
Measures

- A measure is an assessment used to collect evidence of student learning.

- Measures are NOT what the student does but the means by which the students’ work is assessed.
  - For example, a dissertation is not a measure.
  - A rubric used to evaluate the dissertation is a measure.
Measures can be formative or summative.

Measures should be clearly linked and appropriate for specific Learning Outcomes they measure.
Grades must not be used as measures.

Grades are a red flag for SACS reviewers!

Be sure that you have DIRECT, not just Indirect Measures.
For every measure, you must define a target. Targets describe expectations for student performance on the measurements.
Targets

- **Targets** should be meaningful; i.e., they are based on rubrics or other measurement devices that are realistic, capture student learning outcomes (not faculty performance).
- Targets with multiple levels will yield more useful data for program analysis than targets with a single level.

*Note: In WEAVEonline, you cannot enter your Findings until the Target for the Measure has been entered.*
Examples of Targets

Single-level target:
100% of students will score at the level of “Acceptable” or higher on this Measure.

Multi-level target:
100% of the students will score at the level of “Acceptable” or higher on this measure; 60% of the students will score at a level of “Proficient” or higher; and 30% will score at a level of “Exemplary” or higher.
Findings

- Findings are the actual results of student performance on the measurements.
- Findings should...
  - be clearly linked to the program’s Learning Outcomes;
  - be explained so that colleagues and assessors can understand the significance of the findings;
  - have descriptions that are easily understood by someone outside the discipline.
Cautions

- Do NOT enter student-specific information (e.g. names, ID numbers, etc.) in the Findings.
- You cannot enter the Findings until you have established a target for student performance on the Measure.
Action Plans provide an opportunity to act on the results of assessment. Based on the findings:

- Should a program revise the curriculum?
- Should a program add or delete a course?
- Should there be a change in the content of a course?
- Should we look closer at the sequencing of coursework?
Achievement Summary/Analysis

- Answer only the questions related to your area:
  - CTW Reporters answer ONLY the CTW questions.
  - Academic Degree Programs (core, undergraduate, graduate) answer ONLY the Academic Program Questions.
  - DO NOT answer Administrative Department Questions
- Questions change from year to year.
Annual and Special Reporting

- Most academic programs do not report in this section.

- However, this section would be an appropriate place to report student successes or track data for APR. For example, how many graduate students presented at conferences? How many published articles, books, blogs, etc.? How many undergrads submitted to the undergraduate research journal, did presentations, etc.? What do our graduation, progression, and retention rates look like, etc.?
Stores tables, charts, and other files on the WEAVE server. Faculty can link the files to appropriate locations within the report.

Examples of documents to upload:
- Rubrics
- Assessment plans
- Spreadsheets for findings
- Flow charts and bar graphs
- Assignment sheets
- Anything that is relevant to the report
Check for Completion

- Make sure that all updates are complete for the current year (2011–2012).
- Once you’ve edited/updated your current report, be sure to select *Final* on all sections.
- Make sure you have written an action plan for each objective (particularly important when targets are “not met” or “partially met”).
- Update status for last year’s action plans.
- Check document management to be sure that all documents are linked to the appropriate sections.
- Make sure that appropriate Analysis questions are answered and marked as *Final*. 
Check your report status

1. Select cycle
2. Select a report
   ◦ Full Assessment Reports
   ◦ Audit Reports
   ◦ Data Entry Status (DES) Reports
     • DES Details, color-coded
     • DES Overview, statistics
3. Select report entities
   ◦ Selected entities (see choices)

- Click on **Next**
- Open report in: Select **Same Window**
- Click on **Run**.
Final Thoughts

- Assessment provides opportunity to
  - discuss our student learning in a systematic way;
  - work toward creating a sense of consensus about what the work we value in our departments;
  - understand what our students are taking from our classes and what they are missing;
  - approach curriculum changes more efficiently and with a greater understanding of what our students need.
Academic Assessment

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